

10 Instructional Strategies to Support English Language Learners (ELLs)

1. Speak using as few words as possible, use shorter sentences, stop frequently to ensure understanding, use fewer 'big' words, and slow down your rate of delivery.
2. Use simple, direct language for instructions. Use "Finish your work by Friday", rather than "Have it to me by the end of the week."
3. Use visual cues to reinforce work - write key points on the board or the overhead. Use pictures or diagrams whenever possible. Gestures help to increase comprehension of oral lessons.
4. Avoid using **serif** or **decorative** fonts; choose fonts that are plain or that resemble handwriting (like Arial or *Comic Sans MS*). The first languages of some of your ESL learners may not have a writing system at all, while others (like Chinese or Arabic) may not use a Roman alphabet to write their language. Consider printing notes in large fonts (16-20 pt).
5. Use concrete supports, visual aids and graphic organizers as much as possible. Graphs, charts, diagrams, mindmaps, flow charts, timelines, pictures, film, maps, toys, flashcards, posters, cuisenaire rods, or realia (real items, such as fossils, as opposed to photos or descriptions of fossils).
6. Use cooperative learning groups for English Language Learners so they will have more opportunities and time to speak and listen to English in small, comfortable groups of peers. Give them simple group tasks to start.
7. Students new to Canadian schools may need to learn basic writing conventions such as underlining titles, off-setting their name and date, putting spaces between words, etc.
8. Write homework and assignments on the board and always have students put these in their Agenda's for the appropriate days.
9. Focus instruction on the content of each lesson. English will be learned through the key terminology and grammar in each subject area. Reinforce important terms and vocabulary.
10. Teach basic conventions of writing. Students new to Canadian schools may need to learn how to underline titles, off-set their name and date, put spaces between words, etc.